



Home Health Aide (HHA)

Home health and personal care aides assist people who are disabled, chronically ill, or cognitively impaired. They also provide care for older adults who may need assistance. They engage in activities such as bathing and dressing, and they provide services such as light housekeeping.

Aides often keep track of when a client's prescriptions need to be filled or when the client has his or her next doctor's appointment. Aides may prepare leisure activities, including exercise, to keep their clients active and healthy. Aides may be expected to complete unpleasant tasks such as emptying a client's bedpan or changing soiled bed linens.

Perhaps one of the most important duties of a home health care aide is to provide emotional support to the patient and his or her family. Because aides spend large amounts of time with an individual, they are often the first to notice problems or serious changes in a patient's condition. The aide is then responsible for conveying the patient's needs to other medical or psychological professionals when warranted. A home health care aide should always ensure the patient maintains the maximum amount of independence and privacy possible.

Home health aides work in a variety of settings, such as a client's home, small group homes or larger care communities. Some go to the same home every day or week for months or even years. Some visit four or five clients on the same day; others work only with one client all day. This may involve working with other aides in shifts. They may aid people in hospices and day services programs and may also help people with disabilities go to work and stay engaged in their communities.

Indiana Wage Information

	Entry	Median
Hourly Wage	\$8.97	\$10.28

Job Outlook in Indiana

Long term	28.0 % (increase)
Short Term	2.8 % (increase)

*Data collected from hoosierdata.in.gov

Job Duties

- Help clients in daily personal tasks, such as bathing and dressing
- Do light housekeeping, such as laundry, washing dishes and vacuuming a client's home
- Organize a clients schedule and plan appointments
- Arrange transportation to medical offices or for other types of outings
- Prepare meals and perform shopping for basic grocery needs
- Provide companionship
- Care for children who are disabled, or who have sick or disabled parents
- Maintain records of patient care, condition, progress or problems to report/discuss with supervisor or case manager

Important Qualities

Compassion – must be able to provide emotional support to patients

Detail-oriented – must follow specific rules and policies to help care for their clients

Physical stamina – must be comfortable performing physical tasks, such as lifting/turning clients with disabilities

Interpersonal skills – must work closely with clients; sometimes clients are in extreme pain or mental stress, and aides must be sensitive to their emotions; must be cheerful, compassionate, and emotionally stable

Skills and Knowledge

Skills

- Giving full attention to patient; understanding and asking questions as appropriate
- Changing what is done based on other people's actions
- Looking for ways to help people
- Being aware of others actions and understanding why they react as they do
- Monitoring/assessing performance of self and others to make improvements

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar
- Knowledge of information and techniques needed to diagnose/treat injuries, diseases and deformities

Certification and Advancement

There are no specific federal or state requirements for home health aides. Each individual home health agency sets its own regulations and provides on-the-job training for employees. The majority of aides are high school graduates without post-secondary education. On-the-job training consists of information on policies and procedures for home health aides, care protocols and how to handle emergency situations. Home health aides working in certified home health or hospice agencies must get formal training, obtain a license and register with the Nurse Aide Registry.

In the state of Indiana, a Home Health Aide License (HHA) is necessary for employment for federal and state certified home health agencies. To obtain the HHA, applicants must complete a training program of at least 75 hours, with 16 of those hours devoted to supervised practical training. Upon completing the training program, the training provider will notify the Indiana State Department of Health and provide the student with their HHA certification from the Nurse Aide Registry. While there are no specific age or education requirements necessary, individuals would do well to have a high school diploma or equivalency, and be able to pass a physical as well as a drug screen. Without additional training, advancement in this occupation is limited.

Home health aides should be trained in basic nutrition, home sanitation, infection control, first aid, taking vital signs, personal hygiene, interpersonal communication skills, supervised home management, emergency recognition and referral, geriatric care, and legal and ethical responsibilities. Additional training could lead to careers in nursing and physical therapy.

How can YOU get involved?

The world of work relies on the foundational skills students acquire in your classrooms and/or programs!

- Know your students'/clients' interests and career goals
- Affirm the value of the skills/hobbies students demonstrate both in and outside of the classroom
- Infuse your classroom culture and/or meetings with career-minded activities
- Provide time to make connections between the material learned in adult education or workshops and students' daily lives/career aspirations
- Know the basic job descriptions and training requirements of in-demand occupations in your area
- Know which WorkINdiana programs are available in your region
- Know the processes for referring students to postsecondary or on-the-job training
- Post resources where students can find more information about further education/training and careers

Sources and Further Information:

www.hoosierdata.in.gov

www.iseek.org/index.jsp

www.indianaskills.com

www.bls.gov/ooh/

www.secure.in.gov/isdh/20126.htm

*Last Updated July 2015